

VAIN BOASTINGS
OF
FRENCHMEN.

K
THE SAME IN
1386 *as in* 1798.

BEING AN
ACCOUNT OF THE THREATENED
INVASION OF ENGLAND
BY THE
FRENCH

The 10th Year of King Richard II.

EXTRACTED FROM ANTIENT CHRONICLES.

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OF THE GRETE APPAREL OF SHIPPES
THE FRENCHMEN MADE TO PASSE
INTO ENGLAND TENTH YEAR OF
RICHARD II.

THE yong French king Charles, and his uncle the duke of Burgoyne, and constable of Fraunce, had great desyre and affection to go with an army into England, and all knightes and squires of Fraunce did very well agree thereunto, saiying, why should not we once go into Englande to see the countrie, and to learne the pathes of the same, as they have done in Fraunce? So that forthwith great provision and furnytur for that voyage was made in Fraunce on all sydes, and taxes and tallages set and assessed upon the cities, townes, and burgeses of the same, and in the plaine countries, that in an hundreth yere before there had beene none such seene nor heard of. And also great provision made by sea all the sommer tyme untill the moneth of September, they did nothing else, but grinde corne, and bake bisket. and at Tornay, Lisle, Doway, Arras, Amiens, Bethine, Saint Omers, and in all the townes about Sculse, they were occupied to lyke purpose.

pose *. For the Frenche king, by the advise of his counsaile, purposed to take the sea at Schluse, and so to enter England, and to destroy the same. They that were riche men in the realme of Fraunce to the ayde and furniture of this voyage, were taxed and seased at the thirde penny and fourth parte of their goodes, and many payd more than they were worth besides. And from Spain, and from the port of Civile to Pruse, there was no great ship on the sea that the Frenchmen could lay theyr handes upon neyther any ship that was under their obeyfance, but they were reteyned for the French king. And his men, and his other provision came from all partes and arryved in Flaundyr, both wyne, salt, fleshe, fishe, otes, hay, onyons, bisket, flower, egges in pipes, and all manner of thinges that could be devysed, so that the provision was so great as it could not be beleved of any, but of such as sawe it. Besydes this, lordes, knightes, esquires, and men of warre, were written unto and desyred to come and serve the French king in this journey, out of Savoy, Almaine, and from the sonne goyng downe to the lande of the erle of Arminack. And so these lordes of farre countries, as the earle of Savoye was retayned with 500 speares. Also the earle of

* The Frenchmen never shewed more vanitie than they did this year, since the lineage of Capetes began first to rule in France. All the ships that they coule provide from the confines of Spaine, unto the mouth of the Rhine, all along the coast, they assembled at Sluis. Holinshed.

Arminack, and the Dolphyn of Annerency, though they were of farre countries, yet they made their provisions so great and costly, that it was a great marveyle to thinke thereof: And it was a wonder to consider from whence such provision came, what by land, and what by sea, into Flaundys, as to Bruges, to Dan, and to Schluse. Also there was sent for into Holland, Zeland, Middlebourgh, Zirickzee, Dordright, Stonehove, and to all other townes on the sea-coast, and to the rivers enterying into the sea, for all manner of shippes that could do any service, and all were brought to Schluse. *But the Hollanders and Zelanders sayd to them that reteyned them, if ye will have our service, pay us our wages cieerly, or else we will not go to any porte, and so they were payde, wherein they did wisely.* And (sayth Froyffart) I thinke that sithen the creation of the worlde, there was never sene together so many great shippes as were at the tyme at Schluse, and at Blanquerge: for, in the moneth of September, in the sayde yere, they were numbred to be 1287 shippes at Schluse: and their mastes seemed in the sea lyke a great wood or forest. And the Constable of Fraunce, his ship, was apparayled and furnished at Lenterginer in Briteyn. *Also the Constable of Fraunce caused to be made in Briteyn of tymber, a Closure for a towne made like a parke, that when they had taken lande in Englande, to close in their felde to lodge therein with more ease and safetie. And whensoever they shulde remove their felde, the Closure was so made,*
that

that they might take it asunder in pieces, and a great number of carpenters and others were retayned in wages to attend thereupon. And whosoever at that tyme had beene at Bruges, at Dan, or at Schluse, and had seene the businesse that there was in chargyng and ladyng of shippes with haye, sackyng of bisket, and ladyng of onyons, peason, beanes, barley, candelles, hose, shoes, spurres, knyves, daggers, swordes, targettes, axes, mattockes, nayles of all sortes, wymbles, beddes, cowches, torches, piche, tarre, cables, ankers, shot-powder, ordinaunce, armor, and all other thinges necessarye that might be thought upon, as bootes, clokes, brydles, scalyng ladders, and a number of thinges more that I cannot reherce. Whosoever (sayth Froissart) that had bene there and had seene it, although he had bene right fore sicke, yet it woulde have made him to have forgotten both hys disease and paine. The lustie yonkers of Fraunce talking among themselves had almost none other talke, nor made none other accompt, but that the Realme of Englande shoulde have beene utterly spoyled and destroyed for ever and ever, without all mercie and recoverie. Of this great preparation and provision the king of Englande and his counsaile were well informed, and the king was certainly assured that the French king would come into Englande, for so had he and his nobles sworne. And although at the first heryng of thys wonderfull great provision, it dyd somewhat abashe the Englishmen, which
was

was no greate marvayle. *For as the matter of
itselfe was very great, so the same was reported to
be ten times much more then it was.* The erle
Richard Arondell and syr Henry Spencer were
ordeyned to keepe the sea with 40 great shippes
well furnished and trimmed with the number of
300 men of armes and 600 archers. The pro-
visions that were made at thys season at Dan and
at Sluce it is not had in remembrance of man,
neyther in wryting was ever the lyke seene or
read, of the charges of this provision, for gold
and silver was as fast spent by the French king
as though it had reigned out of the clowds, or
that it had come out of the fome and skomme
of the sea.—The French king himselfe, as
yong as he was, had more minde and desyre to
this journey into England, then any other, and
so he shewed himselfe alwayes to the ende there-
of. And nowe to go forward, every man helped
to make provision for other, and to garnishe and
bewtishe their shippes, and to paynt them with
their armes, and to advance and make them a
glorious shewe to the whole worlde. And as it
is before sayd, all that had been reherfed, and
whatsoever else was done in France concerning
the advauncement of this jorney was well knowne
in Englande, which brought some feare among
them, *and therefore they caused dyvers generall
processions to be made in every good towne and citie
three times in the weeke, wherin prayer was made
with fervent spirite and devocion unto almightie
God to be their Protectour and shield against their
enimies, and the perill that the realme was then in.*
And

And yet notwithstanding, there were in Englande at that tyme more than a hundreth thousand that hartely wished and desyred that the Frenchmen myght arryve in Englande. And those lustie young laddes, as triumphyng among themselves and their companions would say, let these Frenchmen come, there shall not one taylor of them retorne agayne into Fraunce. And suche as were in debt and cared not for the payment thereof, they, rejoysing greatly at the coming of the Frenchmen, would saye to their creditors when they demaunded their debt of them; Sirs, be you pacient a little and beare wyth us, for they forge in Fraunce newe storeyns wherewith ye shall be payde. And in trust thereof they lyved and spent very largely. And when they could not be credited, they would saye, what would ye have of us? it were better for you that we shoulde spende freely the gooddes of this realme, rather then the Frenchmen comming bether should finde and consume the same. The earle of Sarisbury, who was a right valiant and prudent knight, sayde before the king and hys uncles, and before all the lords and prelates of England that were present in counsaile. Sir, my sovereigne lord, and all ye my lords and other, it ought not to be marvelled at if our adversary the French king doe come and runne upon us, for sithen the death of our late sovereigne king Edward, this noble realme of England hath beene in great bazard and adventure to have beene lost and destroyed even with the lewde and naughtie people brought up and nourished in the same, which thing is not hidden from Fraunce, and that which is worse, it is well knowne

knowne that we among oureselves are not in perfite love and unite, and that maketh our enemy so bolde. And hereunto I will specyally direct my speeche, to move and exhort that peace, unitie, and love may be had amongst ourselves, and THAT beyng first had and faithfully and lovyngly graunted of every of us, we shall the better devyse the resistance and withstanding of our foreyn enimies. Nowe when the earle of Sarisbury had ended his tale, there was no replie made, but with one voice they consented to enter into devises for defence. And whereas the taxes and tallages were great in Fraunce: in like wise at that time they were great in Englande, so that the realme felt great grieve thereof*.

There were at that time ready in England for defense, of good fighting men, a hundreth thousand archers and ten thousand men of armes. *Nowe the tyme approched, that every man beganne in Fraunce to set forward crying and saying, Now let us go on these cursed Englishemen who have done so many mischiefes and wickednesse in Fraunce the tyme is at hande, that we shall be revenged upon them for the death of our fathers, brethren and kinsmen whome they have cruelly slain and discomfited.*

* Many a man sorowed longe after, but by cause the Commons sawe it was nedefull, sayde, it is not agaynst reason though we be taxed nowe, and so gyve of our goodes to knyghtes and squyeres to defend *their* herytages and *ours*. Ther was raysed the same tyme in England for the defence of the country more than two millions of Floreyne.

Froissart.

Then

Then the Frenche king came to Arras, and daily there came downe people from all partes, in such great numbers that the countrie was almost eaten up. And to say truth, nothing remayned in the countrie, but it was taken from them, without making any payment for the same. So that the poor Comons that had gathered together their cornes, had nothing left them but strawe, and that also was taken from them, and if they made any complaint thereof, they were eyther beaten or flaine. These pondes were fished, there houses beaten downe for fyre wood: so that if the Englishe men had arrived in that countrie, they could have done them no more hurt—neyther was it likely that they would have done so much hurt unto them as the Frenchemen did.

And when the poore pitifully called upon them for some amends, they answered, as nowe we have no silver to pay, but when we returne we will bring inough, and then every thing shall be fully aunswered and payde. *But when the poore people sawe their goodes thus taken away and spent, and they durst not complaine thereof, they cursed them between their teeth, saying; Get ye into England, or to the Devill, and God graunt that ye never returne againe.* The Frenche king came nowe to Lisse in Flaundyr, and the report was, that there should passe into England twenty thousand knightes and squires, twenty thousand cross-bowes, and twenty thousand of other men of warre, which were persons that should enter
into

into England, and remaine in the felde, be-
 fyde all the full furniture of the whole navie
 upon the sea. *Sir Oliver Clifton was in Britteyn*
and was appoynted to bring with him the Cloſure
of the felde made of tymber, whereof mencion is
made before. And with the ſayde Sir Oliver
 Clifton, Counſtable of Fraunce, ſhould come
 out of Briteyn the beſt knightes and ſquires
 therein, for it was the Conſtable's purpoſe and
 entent, that no man ſhoulde enter into Eng-
 lande without he were a man of armes choſen.
 And he gave charge to the Admirall ſaying:
 take hede that ye charge not our ſhippes with
 Verlettes and Boies, for they ſhall do more
 hurt than profite; and they ordeyned all their
 buſineſſe in ſo good order, that dyverſe were
 of that opinion, that if they might arrive alto-
 gether in England, whereas they entended to
 lande (and that was at Orwell Haven) howe
 that they ſhoulde have put the countrie in
 greate feare, and ſo they ſhoulde have done
 without all doubt. For the great lordes, both
 ſpirituell and temporall, and the people of the
 good townes of England were in great doubt:
 But the commons and poore people made ſmall
 accompt thereof, no more did the pore gen-
 tlemen, for they deſyred the warre, eyther to
 leaſe or to winne all. And they ſayde one to
 another, I truſt God hath ſent us a good tyme,
 for that the French king will come into this
 countrie, he ſheweth himſelfe to be of a valiant
 courage, and we have not heard of three
 hundredth yeres paſt of a French king of like
 courage,

courage, but he doth it to make his souldiers good men of warre: and we thanke him that he will thus visite us, for nowe we shall attaine to some riches, or else shortly make an ende of our lyves. Nowe the Frenche kinge came downe to Lisle, to shewe that the journey pleased him, and to come the neerer to his passage. And yet all this time the duke of Berry was behinde, and came fayre and softly, for he had no great appetite to thys journey of going into England: But his long taryeng was very displeasing unto the king and to the duke of Burgoyne and to the other lordes, for they would fayne have bene gone. Still great provision was made, which was very costly and dere unto them, for that which was not woorth *two* shyllings, they payd *ten* shyllings, and yet they woulde nedes have it, for every man desyred to be well furnished, in maner of an envie that everie man desyred to be better appointed than other. And though the greate lordes were well payde their wages, other poore felowes bought the bargayne full dere, for some had owing unto them for a moneth's wages, and yet coulde get nothing. *The treasurer of the warres and clerkes of the chamber of accompts sayde, Sirs, content you untill the next weeke, and then ye shall be payde, and so they were aunswered weekly. And if any payment were made unto them, it was but for eyght dayes, when they were owing eyght weekes. So that some of the wiser sorte, when they sawe this manner of dealing, and howe they were so evill payde, they were much offended,*
and

and sayde, this voyage will be of small effect: for it is most lykely, or at least to be greatly suspected, that so sone as the money is collected and gathered of suche taxes as were set, that then they will breake this journey and retorne home agayne into their awne countreyes, and those which cast these doubts, and provided for themselves, were wise. And dyvers lordes resorted to the king at Schuse, to knowe when they should depart. And ever it was sayde unto them, that within three or foure dayes, or when the duke of Berry doth come, and also that we have winde to serve us. And thus ever the time passed, and the dayes shortened, and the yere beganne to waxe foule, and colde, and the nightes long, the whiche expence and losse of time muche greeved and offended the lordes, for that their charges were great and their victualles much diminished. The duke of Berry toke his leave at Paris, and sayde, that he would never enter there again untill he had bene in England, although it appeared that he thought nothing lesse. And in thys tyme the Constable of Fraunce departed from Lentringer, standyng on the sea side in Briteine. He had 72 great shippes, and he had with him the Closure of the fiede made of tymber. And they had good winde at the begynnyng: But, when they approached neere to Englande, the winde rose so fiercely, and was so tempestuous, about the entrie of Mergate, and the Thamys mouth, that their shippes were scattered, so that 20 kept not together,

gether, and some were driven perforce into Thamys and taken by the Englishemen, and specially there was taken two or three shippes laden with parte of the closure of tymber that was ordeyned to close in the felde, and certeine master carpenters and artificers with them, and so they were brought to London, wherat the king had great joy, and so had all the Londoners*.

But the Constable and other Lords with much paine came to Scuse to the French king. Of the Constable's commyng and his companie the French king was right joyfull, and the king sayd unto him: Sir Constable, when shall we depart? certainly I have great desyr to see England, and mine uncle the duke of Berry will be here within these two dayes; and at the last the duke came to Scuse to the king, and the Counsaile drew together, and the duke brake all this purpose, and sayde flatly, that it was not meete to counsaile the French king, being but a childe, to take the sea at this season of the yere. And in the ende

* This Inclosure, or wall of wood, was twentie foot in heighth, and contained in length, or in compass, three thousand pases; and at the end of everie twelve pases stood a turret, able to receive ten men, than was higher than the rest of the wall by ten feet at the least. The lord William Beauchamp, captane of Calis, tooke two shippes laden with the said Inclosure; and also, the master carpenter of the Inclosure being an Englishman borne, but banished his countrie, two other shippes were likewise taken whose burthen was parcels of the foresaid frame, and the said Inclosure was set up about Winchelsea towne.

Holinshed.

they

they concluded to differre that voyage untill Aprill. And so brake up this most wonderfull voyage for this tyme, which cost the realme of Fraunce a hundreth thousande frankes, thirtie tymes tolde, which of English money was £.333,333. 6s. 8d. after nine frankes to the pounce.

THE END.

THESE ARE THE REMAINS OF THE
HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE
TOWN OF BOSTON FROM 1630 TO 1800
AS PRESERVED IN THE
CITY RECORDS OFFICE
AND THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
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THE END

